

Message Text

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14

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9994

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 17852

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT IN

SUBJECT: ORISSA CHIEF MINISTER SATPATHY OUT

REF: CALCUTTA 3066

CALCUTTA 3066 FOLLOWS. SENT TO NEW DELHI FOR ACTION ON 11 DEC 76.
BIENG RPTD FOR YOUR INFO.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CALCUTTA 3066

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: ORISSA CHIEF MINISTER SATPATHY OUT

1. OUR SOURCES HERE TELL US THAT MRS GANDHI YESTERDAY
(DECEMBER 10) GAVE THE SIGNAL FOR THE OUSTER OF MRS
NANDINI SATPATHY AS CHIEF MINISTER OF ORISSA. MRS.
SATPATHY'S RESIGNATION WILL TAKE PLACE THIS WEEKEND OR
EARLY NEXT WEEK AT THE LATEST. THIS WILL BE FOLLOWED
BY A VERY BRIEF PERIOD OF PRESIDENT'S RULE, A WEEK
OR SO, AFTER WHICH BINAYAK ACHARYA, ONE OF MRS.
SATPATHY'S CABINET OFFICERS WHOM SHE RECENTLY TRIED
TO STRIP OF HIS PORTFOLIO AND LEADER OF THE CONGRESS
OPPOSITION TO HER, WILL BE INSTALLED AS CHIEF MINISTER.
WE BELIEVE THIS INFORMATION TO BE ACCURATE.

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2. BASIC EXPLANATION FOR MRS SATPATHY'S FALL APPEARS

TO BE THAT SHE WAS ON SANJAY GANDHI'S LIST OF PRO-MINENT CONGRESS FIGURES WITH A LEFTIST BACKGROUND (SHE WAS ONCE A MEMBER OF THE CPI), WHOM HE WANTED OUT. BUT, SHE WAS NEVER THE UNDISPUTED LEADER OF THE ORISSA CONGRESS AND HER REPUTATION WAS HURT BY TALKES OF PERSONAL CORRUPTION. IN ADDITION, MRS SATPATHY MADE THE MISTAKE SOME THREE WEEKS BACK OF MOVING ABRUPTLY AGAINST ACHARYA AND OTHER LEADERS OF HER ORISSA CONGRESS OPPOSITION; IT WAS A BOLD STEP, JUST THE SORT OF THING MRS GANDHI HERSELF MIGHT HAVE DONE AND PROBABLY WOULD HAVE CARRIED OFF. BUT IT SPLIT THE ORISSA CONGRESS AND GAVE MRS SATPATHY'S OPPONENTS THE OPENING THEY NEEDED TO JUSTIFY HER REMOVAL.

3. MRS SATPATHY'S FALL SEEMS LIKELY TO GIVE WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER RAY AT LEAST A BRIEF REPRIEVE. THE WAR OF WORDS BETWEEN RAY'S OPPONENTS AND SUPPORTERS CONTINUES DAILY, BUT OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT BARRING SOME ILL-CONSIDERED MOVE ON HIS PART MAY WILL BE SPARED UNTIL AFTER A NEW CABINET IS INSTALLED IN ORISSA AND THINGS SETTLE DOWN THERE.

4. WILL GIVE YOU FULL BACKGROUND ON ORISSA SITUATION AND MORE ON WEST BENGAL IN CABLES EARLY NEXT WEEK.
KORN

UNQUOTE

SCHNEIDER

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